



## Alaska WIC Program Vendor Application Process



### Purpose of the WIC Program

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) was enacted by the U.S. Congress in 1972 as an amendment to the 1966 Child Nutrition Act. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides funding for WIC. Participant services are provided by grantee health or social services organizations and administered by the State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance, Family Nutrition.

Nutrition education is the cornerstone of the WIC program. The foods offered through the program are an enhancement of these nutrition education services. WIC foods are selected because they address specific nutritional health needs and promote healthy pregnancies as well as healthy growth and development in young children. WIC checks and Fruit and Vegetable Vouchers (FVV) are issued monthly to eligible pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding mothers, infants, and children under the age of five.

The Alaska WIC Program authorizes a sufficient number of vendors to assure reasonable participant convenience and access to WIC foods and to ensure the lowest practicable food prices.

### Vendor Selection Criteria

Vendors who meet the following selection criteria may be authorized to accept WIC checks and FVV:

- Be in a location accessible to program participants and State and local WIC agency staff.
- Be authorized as a USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or "Food Stamp," vendor in good standing. The vendor may not have been suspended or disqualified by SNAP within the past three years.
- Possess a current Alaska Business License with "supermarket and other grocery" as the primary line of business.
- Be a full-service grocery store that stocks a variety of meat, poultry, seafood, cereals, whole grains, dairy, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Convenience stores, which stock a limited variety and brands of food, are not authorized.
- Be open for business at least eight hours per day, six days per week.
- Comply with business integrity requirements: a vendor applicant is not eligible if its current owners, officers, or managers have civil judgments entered against them, or have been convicted of any activity indicating a lack of business integrity. Such offenses include, but are not limited to fraud; antitrust violation(s); embezzlement, theft, or forgery; bribery; falsification or destruction of records; making false statements or claims; receiving stolen property; obstruction of justice; arson; conspiracy; officially removed from any federal, state, or local programs due to business improprieties.

- Derive less than 50 percent of total sales from the sale of WIC foods.
- Be in compliance with the program's competitive price requirements (be competitive with, and within the price limitations for similarly situated vendors in terms of type, size of store, and geographic location).
- Purchase WIC approved infant formula directly from an infant formula manufacturer or supplier named on the "WIC Approved Infant Formula Suppliers" list.
- Purchase WIC food items only from a wholesale supplier, manufacturer, or other nonretail suppliers; no WIC approved foods may be purchased from other retail stores for resale to WIC participants.
- Maintain an adequate stock of WIC food items for the number of participants regularly accessing the store; at least the minimum required stocks of WIC foods must be in the store at all times.
- Maintain prices for WIC approved foods that are at or below the limits established by the WIC Nutrition Program's current price management system.
- Post food prices for all foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, on each item, or on the shelf next to the item.
- Have electronic cash registers capable of producing receipts that include the store name, food product name and description, quantity sold, price of each item, total actual purchase price, and the date of sale.
- Not provide incentive items or advertisements with the intention to solicit WIC participants.
- Comply with approved use of WIC acronym, logo, and facsimiles.

### **Submitting an Application for Authorization**

A retailer who wishes to be authorized as a WIC vendor may request an application packet from the Vendor Management Unit by phone (907) 465-3100, or email [wic@alaska.gov](mailto:wic@alaska.gov), or download the packet from the WIC Program website.

The following forms and information must be provided for an application to be complete:

- WIC Vendor Application Form
- Vendor Application – Agent Authorized to Act for Vendor (if applicable)
- Alaska WIC Banking Information Form
- WIC Price Survey
- Current Alaska Business License
- Current SNAP Authorization Certificate
- Current Alaska DEC Food Establishment Permit

The WIC Vendor Management Unit will review the application to for completeness and to determine whether all selection criteria have been met. This review will be completed within thirty (30) days of receipt of a complete application.

### **Pre-Authorization Onsite Review and Training**

Program regulations require WIC to conduct an onsite visit to an applicant vendor's store to verify that all requirements are met. In Alaska, most pre-authorization monitoring visits are conducted by local WIC agency staff who also provide training for the manager and cashiers. During this visit, the

monitor checks to make sure that the store has the minimum required WIC food items in stock, shelf prices are as reported on the price survey, the store is clean and well organized, and all other requirements are met. The monitor makes a recommendation to State agency staff whether to authorize the vendor to accept WIC.

In rural areas, a pre-authorization visit may be delayed until local WIC agency staff are able to travel to the community.

### **Authorization to Accept WIC Checks and FVVs**

Upon approval of the vendor's application, the WIC Program offers a vendor agreement to the vendor. This agreement is the standard agreement with the same terms and conditions for all authorized vendors. The agreement must be signed by a representative who has legal authority to obligate the vendor and then by the WIC Program Director.

The signed vendor agreement will be returned to the vendor, along with a "WIC Accepted Here" sign that must be posted near the store's entrance. The Program also provides a vendor stamp with a unique vendor number that must be stamped on all WIC checks and FVVs accepted by the vendor. The vendor's account is activated in the WIC check processing and management information systems, and the vendor is notified that the store may begin to accept WIC checks and FVVs.